material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking-troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed. Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the *gurn*, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings, though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would overtop the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure from it. It would be an even greater danger to public health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts, but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed, at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields. The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance, and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or